5.2 Lent: A Time for Growth

This unit explores the season of Lent as a time of conversion and growth. It presents Jesus’ passion as an experience of suffering and rejection. It also looks at Jesus’ response to a person suffering rejection. Students are encouraged to reflect on their experiences of acceptance and rejection and explore how times of difficulty can be times of growth. Students will be challenged to reflect on the experience of God with us today in times of difficulty. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving will be linked to Caritas material and raising awareness for Project Compassion. The Church’s celebration of the events of Holy Week will be presented and explored.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Values & Attitudes**  *Students will demonstrate that they are:* | **Knowledge & Understandings**  *Students will demonstrate that they can:* | **Skills**  *Students will demonstrate that they can:* |
| L3.1 willing to accept their call to respond to God in their lives | identify challenges to respond to the presence of God | examine ways in which the liturgical life of the Church nourishes and challenges them to respond to the presence of God |
| S3.1 aware of their responsibility to live according to the values of Jesus | explain the consequences of living according to the values of Jesus | analyse their own actions according to the values of Jesus |

Syllabus Outcomes  
Liturgical Year/Self – Stage 3

Classroom Outcomes

*Students will be able to:*

* explain how Jesus responded to people who experienced difficulty and rejection
* describe how they can grow, with the help of God’s Holy Spirit, during times of rejection and difficulty
* identify how Jesus responded to rejection

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Scripture | Doctrine |
| Matthew 4:1-11 *Jesus in the desert*  Mark 1:40-45 *Jesus heals a leper*  Matthew 26:36 - 27:56 *The passion and death of Jesus*  Matthew 26:17-29 *The Last Supper*  John 13:1-20 *Jesus washes the feet of his disciples*  Mark 11:7-10 *Jesus enters* *Jerusalem*  John 19:38-42 *The burial of Jesus* | * Jesus brings hope and healing * Jesus Christ is both human and divine * Jesus, the Son of God, in his humanness experienced life as we do * During Holy Week the Church remembers and celebrates the experiences and events of Jesus in his last days on earth * Jesus is present in all experiences of life * God’s Holy Spirit is with us and strengthens us in our journey of conversion |

Spiritual Reflection for Teachers

The word ‘Lent’ comes from an early European word for ‘Spring’. You can imagine tiny bulbs pushing upward through frozen ground. All life, especially in its beginning, involves struggle.

There was a famous department store that had as its image a single oak tree on a hill. The accompanying motto read: "While I live I grow." If you stop being open to growth in spiritual and physical dimensions, you have really ceased to live. Remember the quirky question: "Is there life before death?"

Catechism of the Catholic Church

**Excerpts from the Catechism of the Catholic Church are included below as information for teachers. They present the Church’s teachings contained in this unit.**

**472** This human soul that the Son of God assumed is endowed with a true human knowledge. As such, this knowledge could not in itself be unlimited: it was exercised in the historical conditions of his existence in space and time. This is why the Son of God could, when he became man, "increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man", and would even have to inquire for himself about what one in the human condition can learn only from experience. This corresponded to the reality of his voluntary emptying of himself, taking "the form of a slave".

**589** Jesus gave scandal above all when he identified his merciful conduct toward sinners with God's own attitude toward them. He went so far as to hint that by sharing the table of sinners he was admitting them to the messianic banquet. But it was most especially by forgiving sins that Jesus placed the religious authorities of Israel on the horns of a dilemma. Were they not entitled to demand in consternation, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" By forgiving sins Jesus either is blaspheming as a man who made himself God's equal, or is speaking the truth and his person really does make present and reveal God's name.

**1430** Jesus' call to conversion and penance, like that of the prophets before him, does not aim first at outward works, "sackcloth and ashes," fasting and mortification, but at the *conversion of the heart, interior conversion*. Without this, such penances remain sterile and false; however, interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance.

**1818** The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it takes up the hopes that inspire men's activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven; it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. Buoyed up by hope, he is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity.

Scripture: Background Information

**Matthew 4:1-11 Jesus in the desert**

The three synoptic gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke) record the scene of Jesus in the desert for forty days, although they are all different in details. Mark has the simplest version (2 verses) and this is important to note as it probably more directly reflects the actual historical situation. Temptation is such an inner personal experience that the writers of the gospels probably did not know what exactly went on in Jesus’ mind beyond the fact that he was tempted. Matthew and Luke therefore present the event in ways that make it meaningful for their communities. The number ‘forty’ is one of those important and significant biblical numbers indicating that an event of greatness is about to begin. The flood story (Genesis 6-9) has rain fall for forty days. The people of God were in the desert for forty years as a formation time, or a time of challenge, after the Exodus from Egypt. So Jesus, as the Moses figure in Matthew’s gospel, also spends forty days in the wilderness as a time of preparation for his ministry.

Matthew’s account (the text we have here) is the only version to suggest that the Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness to be tempted. The others are much more circumspect about the role of the Spirit. Jesus, we are told, fasted and so was hungry. However the temptation was not to eat, as he could have done this, but to show off. Jesus resists this with a quote from Deuteronomy 8:3, “Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God”. Love of God and God’s word are basic themes in Deuteronomy and Matthew. So Jesus stands firmly in the tradition of the holiness of his people and their God.

**Mark 1:40-45 Jesus heals a Leper.**

In this text Jesus is approached by a leper for healing. Leprosy is a contagious skin disease which, at that time made the leper ‘unclean’ and as such, not able to participate in the liturgical life of the community. The leper, being unclean was subject to the laws in Chapters 13 and 14 of Leviticus. Lepers were to live apart from the community to separate the ‘clean’ from the ‘unclean’.

We read in this text (v41) that Jesus was moved with pity, sometimes translated as *anger.* Whether Jesus was moved by pity or anger, it would seem he felt strongly for this man who was treated with contempt in his society. Although the disease was contagious, requiring separation from others, it was still possible to treat him with compassion. Jesus’ healing shows his power to save even those excluded by the Mosaic law. In vs44 Jesus tells the man to go and show himself to the priest and “offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded”. Here Jesus shows his regard for the Mosaic law, which soon in Mark’s Gospel, he is accused of breaking. The levitical priests were the ones who determined who was ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’.

**Mark 11:7-10 Jesus enters Jerusalem**

All the gospels record this scene of Jesus riding on a borrowed donkey into Jerusalem and being greeted by people. Only John mentions “branches of palm”. Matthew and Mark have branches and greenery and Luke has no branches at all. In the liturgical year we follow the Johannine tradition and call the event Palm Sunday. It is often good to use this comparative discussion of the various gospels with our students as they enjoy some detective work on the texts, and come to know the accounts more engagingly.

Hosanna is Hebrew and means “Please save us”, but had become a well-used prayer by Jesus’ day. Mark also quotes from Psalm 118:25-26 – “Hosanna! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!” So the words were not invented spontaneously for Jesus.

**Matthew 26:36-27:56 The Passion and death of Jesus**

The Passion narratives of the four gospels vary considerably in detail. John’s version varies the most. Such comparative understanding is important as it enables us to appreciate the different interpretations of Jesus’ death. In fact it is John’s version with which we are probably more familiar. It is read every Good Friday, whereas the synoptic versions (Mark, Matthew or Luke) are read in turn on Palm Sunday, according to the three-yearly cycle.

These texts of Jesus’ death can sound anti-Semitic. Indeed they have led to the murder of Jews at Easter in past centuries, a fact that would horrify and sadden Jesus. We need to be aware of this with students, and not present the Jewish people as responsible for the death of Jesus. Sadly many Christians have wrongly done so in the past.

The passion narratives are written with skill and sensitivity and not sentimentality. They are dramatic with contrasting characters and situations – the betrayal with a kiss by Judas, the denial by Peter, the release of guilty Barrabas, the execution of innocent Jesus, the desertion of his male friends, and the steadfast watch of the women. The actual death of Jesus is simply written, without the terrible details of crucifixion being emphasised. The last words of Jesus vary in Matthew, Luke and John. Matthew generally follows Mark’s version, but does have some original material, such as 27:51-53. The tearing of the Temple veil and the dead rising are highly symbolic, representing the end times and the coming of a divine messiah.

**Matthew 26:17-29 The Last Supper**

The Passover meal is a very important family ritual meal within Judaism. It was so in Jesus’ time as well. Jewish families would come to celebrate the feast in Jerusalem, as did Jesus and his followers on this occasion. Scholars have calculated that the population of Jerusalem then was about 30,000, and it rose to about 130,000 during Passover, which lasted a week. Such numbers meant more Roman soldiers were deployed on active service in Jerusalem during Passover.

The ritual blessing of the bread and wine is a Jewish practice for Sabbath and festival meals, and thus a beautiful, normal and common occurrence.

Passover is a solemn yet happy remembrance of deliverance from slavery to freedom, a remembrance of God’s great acts of saving love and deliverance from death. Each Jew every year recalls the meaning of Passover as if it were all happening over again for each individual. What is the personal meaning of these holy days of our Easter festival for us, and our students?

**John 13:1-20 Jesus washes the feet of his disciples**

This account of Jesus washing the feet of his apostles is both beautiful and challenging. It speaks of the importance of service in leadership. Each year we remember and re-enact this event on Holy Thursday. It is only recorded in one of the four gospels – that of John. Incidentally and unexpectedly this same gospel has no reference to the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. The major focus for John at that meal is the washing of the feet, which was not part of the Passover ritual. The washing of hands was. Feet washing was performed by servants, or slaves, as an act of hospitality after travel in sandals or bare feet on dusty roads.

Many scholars suggest that the writer of John's gospel is following a different chronology or even different calendar; hence there are differences between John’s gospel and the other gospels. Again it is important for students to note and find these differences. The different accounts of the Last Supper and Jesus’ death in the gospels are equally important and need to be noted and believed for the message they convey.

**John 19:38-42 The burial of Jesus**

Jesus’ body is laid in a tomb belonging to the Pharisee, Joseph, on the Friday afternoon. John has two men collect the body, but does not say to whom the tomb belongs. It is simply close by the place of death and they were in a hurry. The next day was the Sabbath and the feast of Passover (when burials could not take place). Jesus is buried with a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes - an extraordinarily large amount, usually only required for the burial of a king. It is only John who mentions this detail, and it fits with John’s theological motifs.

Jesus is always in control, especially in the Passion narratives of the Gospel of John.

The Church’s Teaching and Lived Tradition

**In Tradition - *To Know, Worship and Love,* Year 5, p48**

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. In churches on this day, we will receive a cross of ashes on our foreheads. The priest, deacon or special ministers administer the ashes to the community.

This is a sign for everyone to see that we are prepared to repent and believe the Good News.

It reminds us of Jesus’ death on the cross and our own mortality.

The ashes also remind us that God made us from nothing, and that nothing on earth is as important as loving God.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Celebration: Prayer and Liturgy

**Celebration is a key part of Religious Education. The following suggestions provide opportunities throughout the unit for celebration in prayer and liturgy. Most of these suggestions are included as ‘teaching/learning’ activities in Unit Content sections.**

1. Set the class prayer place. See Resource Sheet 1 for suggested story script for Lent - Year 5.
2. Participate in Ash Wednesday liturgy and the school liturgies for Holy Week
3. Use the song ‘The Face of God’ by Mark Raue. Prepare a class celebration with a focus on how we can be the face of God to others. Include a rite of healing asking the Holy Spirit to be with us in our experiences of difficulty and /or rejection to make us whole.
4. Read Matthew’s account of the death of Jesus as a guided meditation. Students respond to this text using symbol and colour or journaling.
5. Lent and those experiencing difficulty

Create and celebrate three liturgies over the season of Lent. In each liturgy, use one of the following Scripture passages and a case study or profile from the Project Compassion Education Kits:

Matt 4:1-11

Mk 1:40-42

Jn 13:1-20

Pray for the person and community in the profile and ask the Holy Spirit to help us respond to this situation with love and acceptance. Use appropriate hymns, and prayers from KWL. Incorporate liturgies designed for the Project Compassion Kit. These liturgies may include a follow-up action to raise money for Project Compassion and/or raise awareness in the school, eg school assembly.

Assessment

**Interim Assessment Statement 2014**

The identification of Teaching/Learning strategies as ‘suggested assessment’ has been removed from the 3-6 RE curriculum. The type of assessment activity and the way evidence of learning is gathered will vary, depending on such factors as; the outcomes being assessed, the evidence being gathered, the teaching and learning activity, context and students’ learning needs (NSW Board of Studies, <http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/support-materials/k-6-assessment-strategies/>) .

Assessment in Religious Education is based on the same principles as in other key learning areas. Please refer to the CEO Sydney site supporting the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in the context of the NSW BOS Syllabus. At this site <https://sites.google.com/a/syd.catholic.edu.au/professional-learning-modules/home> professional learning modules are provided to support teachers as they engage with the NSW BOS Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum.

**Module 4, Assessment and Planning** explores the principles of effective assessment ***for***, ***as*** and ***of*** learning and considers a range of strategies and methods for assessing student learning. Activities focus on moving beyond assessment as an index of learning, towards assessment that motivates, enhances learning and achieves deeper understanding to meet the diverse learning needs of all as students. Participants are encouraged to reflect on assessment as a driver for improvement in teaching and learning.

**Religious Education Curriculum and Assessment**

In Year 3-6 Religious Education Curriculum, both Syllabus Outcomes and Classroom Outcomes are key reference points for decisions about students’ progress and achievement. Classroom outcomes are more specific to the unit content. Unit Content statement and *Students will learn* statements in each unit should also be taken into account in planning and developing learning and assessment opportunities. Outcomes and Unit Content Statements are derived from Syllabus objectives.

Effective Religious Education involves teaching the Catholic faith (Scripture, doctrine, traditions, prayer and sacraments) and nurturing the faith of the child. There is no attempt to assess the child’s faith. Assessment is concerned with skills, knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith taught in the curriculum and supported in the religious life of the school.

Resources

***To Know Worship and Love*: Year 5, Chapters 3 and 6, (2003), James Goold House Publications, Melbourne, Victoria**

**Books**

*The Sacramentary*

*The Lectionary*

Woods L, (1990), *A Dictionary for Catholics,* HarperCollins, Victoria

**Websites/Other**

Caritas Australia website [www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au)

*Project Compassion Kits* distributed by Caritas Australia annually. This resource is an excellent resource for recalling Jesus’ passion and the human experiences of suffering today.

Key to Symbol

✪ denotes higher order activity

Unit Content 1

Lent is a time of growth and conversion.

*Students will learn:*

* about ways we can grow with the help of the Holy Spirit.
* to explore the use of images in Scripture, 40 days, desert …
* about Lent as a time of conversion

Unit Content: Background Information

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday for the Latin Catholic Church. Some Eastern Catholic Churches begin Lent with Ash Monday. Lent concludes before the beginning of the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday evening, which is the beginning of the Easter Triduum (3 days). This follows the Jewish understanding of a day beginning at sunset on one day and concluding at sunset on the following day.

The name Ash Wednesday (or Ash Monday) refers to the day we place blessed ashes on the foreheads of the faith community. The tradition of ashes has its origin in the Order of Penitents, those who were seeking reconciliation covered themselves with ashes and did penance in preparation for forgiveness. Later in history, it became common for all who desired to repent to mark themselves with the sign of ashes. The ashes are a sacramental – a holy sign that fosters faith. The Ash Wednesday ceremony invites us to make a fresh start during Lent in preparation for Easter.

Lent is a 40 day period. The number 40 has scriptural symbolism: Elijah fasted for 40 days on his journey to Mt Horeb (1Kgs 19:8), Moses fasted for 40 days on Mt Sinai (Ex 34:28), the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. The colours and moods of Lent remind us that this is a penitential season. In the early Church penitents would do penance for their sins by fasting, prayer and works of charity in preparation for forgiveness by the bishop. The sacrament of Penance is linked to this season. Lent has a long history of being a time of reconciliation and conversion. As we celebrate this season, we are invited to live out, in very practical ways, this spirit of repentance.

Lent is a time when we are invited to spiritual growth through acts of penance: prayer, fasting and almsgiving or works of charity. Christians use the season of Lent as a time to grow and change. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we seek conversion through praying, fasting and almsgiving. The priority is an interior conversion of the heart.

For the early Christians, fasting usually accompanied prayer when a person wanted God’s help for something important. Today, people fast during Lent as a form of penance or self-discipline. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting and abstinence. How can students participate in this tradition? Prayer is obvious. There are a range of personal and communal prayers in which students can participate. Fasting and abstinence: students could decide to do without something that they enjoy. Combine this with almsgiving: they can give up in order to help others – ‘give-out’. For example a student or class may decide to do without their canteen treat, put the money in Project Compassion and pray for a person profiled in the Caritas resource kit. The practices of conversion during Lent have a personal and communal dimension. They encourage us to care for the poor by giving of ourselves. Growth occurs when we reach out to others. This process is an initiative of God, who calls us to conversion of heart and a deeper relationship with God.

In this section students explore prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and Jesus’ temptation in the desert. The desert is a rich image in our tradition. In the desert we are “purified” or prepare for an event. A desert experience reflects the dryness, difficulty and challenge of the experience. It can help us focus on what is important. Times of challenge and crisis can be times of growth and the birth of something new. Lead the students to an understanding of growth within the context of community. The Church community enters into a time of penance and conversion, with the power of the Holy Spirit, together. We are not just renewed individually, but also as a Church community.

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Set the class prayer place for the Season of Lent, commencing on Ash Wednesday. See Resource Sheet 1 for suggested story script for Lent - Year 5.
* Recall previous learning about Lent, with a focus on the season of Lent as a time to grow and change, to be more like Christ.
* Show students a bowl of ashes. What do ashes bring to mind? From where do ashes come? Link ashes to fire and the Australian bush experience: fire – death and ashes – regrowth.
* Explain where we get the ashes for Ash Wednesday, and the placing of ashes on the forehead. Why are ashes placed on our forehead? Remind students of the words said as the ashes are placed on the forehead: “Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel.” Also look at words in KWL,Year 5, ‘In Tradition’, p48. Link these words to growth and conversion.
* Read KWL, Year 5, p45-46 Use a thesaurus to investigate alternatives to ‘repent’, ‘abstinence’ and ‘fasting’. Ensure students have an understanding of these words/concepts.
* Tell the story of ‘Jesus in the Desert’ (Mt 4:1-11). (Teachers: the ‘Scripture and Unit Content: Background Information’ provides useful information about this passage.)
* Engage students in wondering. The following are suggested wondering statements.

I wonder why the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness (desert) just before he began his ministry (work in the world).

I wonder what it was like for Jesus in the desert.

I wonder why he fasted in the desert.

I wonder what it’s like to be very hungry, to be famished.

I wonder what other stories you remember that happened in the desert.

I wonder what Jesus meant when he said to the tempter, ‘People do not live by bread only, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ (If necessary go back to the temptation that these words are a response to).

I wonder what it means to, “Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.”

I wonder what other things some people choose to serve today, rather than serving God.

* Explore the practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving as exercises of growth and conversion. Challenge students to decide on two or three ideas for the whole class. Use the Project Compassion resource kit. By deciding on some class actions of fasting, almsgiving and prayer we highlight the importance of community in growth and conversion.
* What is prayer? How can prayer help us grow? What prayers can we use this Lent, individually and as a class? Introduce the Prayer of St Ignatius (KWL, Year 5, p48) in class during Lent and prayers in the Project Compassion resource kit.
* Use the Project Compassion Education Kits published by Caritas to connect Lenten practices with social justice and the work of this Church agency.

Unit Content 2

Jesus reached out to those who were experiencing difficulty and rejection. We, too, can experience the loving presence of Jesus in our times of rejection.

*Students will learn:*

* about how Jesus reached out to others experiencing difficulty and rejection
* to explore their own experience of difficulty and rejection

Unit Content: Background Information

Jesus knew the pain of rejection, as did the first disciples. For many people throughout history, and now in our present time, rejection is a real and familiar part of our human experience. Strengthened by his prayer, Jesus shows us how to integrate and bring meaning to painful experiences. Times of crisis are essential to growth and life. God transforms our pain and suffering into growth and salvation. In unity with God, our times of crisis and pain can be times of growth and new life. This reflects the Paschal Mystery. The Passion of Jesus reveals a very real and human dynamic of life-death-new life. In transforming our struggles and difficulties to life and hope, the Holy Spirit allows us to participate in the salvific mission of Jesus Christ.

Jesus not only experienced rejection, he responded to others who were rejected. His response was one of love and acceptance. Living in union with the Holy Spirit we can respond in the same manner. This unit prepares the students for 6.1: The Reign of God: *Breaking Down Barriers*. Discrimination is an experience of rejection. Justice demands that we accept all as made in the image of God. What is our Christian response to people who are different/rejected/marginalised?

In exploring the concepts of rejection and acceptance we face the truth that we also reject others, as individuals and as communities. How do we respond in times when we are rejected? How do we respond when we are the people who reject others, or when we see others being rejected? Reflecting on how we treat others can lead to a conversion of heart. How can we show the presence of the Holy Spirit today? How can we reach out to support others in pain and suffering?

Lent is a time set aside for Christians to reflect on our attitudes, behaviour and the meaning of our baptismal promises in our lives. We are invited to review our life in prayer and reflection, and to seek growth and healing in preparation for Easter.

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Choose children’s literature that deals with difficulty and rejection. Explore ways the literature deals with these concepts. It is also possible to explore the concepts of rejection and difficulty in movies. For example, Harry Potter, Shrek (Shrek wants to be alone in the swamp because he is tired of all the rejection. He is hurt by it all). How do characters in movies and literature deal with rejection? How does it impact on their lives?
* Tell the story, Jesus Heals a Leper (Mk 1:40-42). See Resource Sheet 3 for suggested script and materials.
* Engage students in Wondering. See suggested wondering statements below (also on story script).

I wonder why the leper chose to ask Jesus for healing.

I wonder why Jesus was moved with pity for the leper.

I wonder why Jesus asked the leper not to tell anyone what had happened.

I wonder what we can learn from the way Jesus responded to the man with the leprosy.

I wonder if you know of a person or people who are treated as outcasts today.

I wonder if you’ve ever felt rejected.

* Using the above and other passages that students are familiar with, students write a response to the question: How does Jesus respond to people who are rejected? Give information to support your answer.
* **Exploring the Experience of Being Rejected and Accepted**
  + Explore with students experiences of acceptance and rejection in their relationships. Reflect on situations in the playground, classroom and at home. How do people feel when they are rejected? How do people feel when they are accepted? Students complete two “Y” charts, one for acceptance and one for rejection.
  + Open a forum to enable students to identify actions and attitudes of rejection that need to be addressed within themselves, within the class community and within Australian society. How could we possibly address these? Pose the question: How can we learn more about others, and ourselves through these experiences?
* **Exploring the Experience of Accepting and Rejecting Others**
  + Students reflect on which of their actions give messages of acceptance or rejection. Who do I/we reject by my/our actions and words? Why? In what ways can I/we be more accepting?
  + Why might people reject others?
* Journal: During this Lent how can I respond to the God’s Holy Spirit to become more like Jesus in my acceptance of others?
* How might people deal with times of difficulty and rejection? Brainstorm and list ideas. Who helps us in times of difficulty and rejection? Lead students to identify the importance of prayer and seeking help from others, especially God, in times of difficulty.

1. Use the Project Compassion Education Kits distributed by Caritas to reflect on the situation of poverty and injustice. How can we respond to this situation? How does the Church respond to this situation?

* Students reflect on the following questions using 1:2:4 process:
  + How does prayer help when we feel rejected or are in times of difficulty?
  + How can we act like Jesus in times of difficulty and rejection?
  + What are the challenges to responding to the loving presence of Jesus during these times?
* Suggest to the students that just as Jesus brought healing and hope to the leper, so too he brings healing and hope when we are rejected. This comes through prayer, the actions of others and the Scriptures. Design a poster or piece of artwork that communicates the hope and healing presence of Jesus.
* Use the song ‘The Face of God’ by Mark Raue. Prepare a class celebration with a focus on how we can be the face of God to others. Include a rite of healing asking the Holy Spirit to be with us in our experiences of difficulty and /or rejection to make us whole.
* How would responding to others who are rejected or in difficulty enable me to grow? Write a response.

Unit Content 3

During Holy Week, the Church remembers the rejection and the death of Jesus.

*Students will learn:*

* about the passion of Jesus as an experience of rejection
* to explore how the Church remembers the passion of Jesus during Holy Week

Unit Content: Background Information

Holy Week is a time set aside for the preparation of the Easter celebration. It begins with Palm Sunday. The core of Holy Week is the Easter Triduum – Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Its climax is the Easter Vigil when new members are initiated into the Church. The Triduum closes with evening prayer on Easter Sunday. The Easter Triduum celebrates Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection as one feast. All of these events are key moments in the Paschal Mystery.

Jesus came to proclaim the Good News of the Reign of God. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. His commitment to his mission led to his crucifixion. Jesus freely chose to continue his work despite the dangers of rejection and death. His life, passion, death and resurrection became our salvation. The Church, filled with the Holy Spirit, continues Jesus’ mission.

In teaching about the events of Good Friday, we remember the life-giving death of Jesus. Jesus’ passion and death are the ultimate rejection, and the ultimate act of salvation. Through the actions of the Holy Spirit, we participate in this saving action when we unite our experiences of suffering with that of Jesus’ passion.

The Good Friday Liturgy has three parts: Liturgy of the Word, Veneration of the Cross and Holy Communion. It has no introductory or concluding rites since it flows on from the Holy Thursday Liturgy and leads into the Easter Vigil Liturgy. Mass is not celebrated on Good Friday. However, in the Liturgy of Good Friday the Rite of Communion is celebrated, with consecrated hosts from Holy Thursday.

Unit 5:3 Easter: A Time for Hope and New Life explores the symbols and rituals in the Easter vigil celebration. This is the high point of the Church’s liturgical life. Explain this focus to the students and encourage them to attend the Easter vigil service in preparation for the Easter unit.

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

1. Students list times when Jesus experienced difficulty and rejection. Recall scriptural events and classify them under headings: 1. Difficulty and 2. Rejection. Report back to whole class.
2. Students brainstorm everything they can recall about Holy Week. As a whole group create a ‘Holy Week’ timeline. Refer to KWL Year 5, p67-70. How does the Church celebrate each significant day of Holy Week?
3. In small groups students are given the account of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem: Mark 11:7-10.

Pose the following questions:

* + - What is the mood/feeling in this passage?
    - Is this an experience of acceptance or rejection? What evidence is there for your answer?
    - Discuss the significance of this event in light of the rejection, passion and death of Jesus.
    - Why, do you think, the crowd accepted and welcomed Jesus here and rejected Jesus and put him to death on Good Friday?

1. **A** In small groups, students are given the passion narrative of Matthew 26:36-27:56.
   * + Students outline a sequence of events.
     + Students identify: Who rejects Jesus? Why? How? Jesus’ response? (See Resource Sheet 4.)
   * Who showed acceptance and love towards Jesus? How? How does Jesus’ respond?
2. Read Matthew’s account of the death of Jesus (27:45-53) as a guided meditation. Students respond to this text using symbol and colour or journaling.
3. What images are used in Matthew’s account? How do they add meaning to the passion account? For example 27:51 the “earth shook” – this image helps convey the significance of the event. A great man has died; God’s son has been killed.
4. After exploring the passion and death of Jesus students formulate a few generalisations about their learning. What do we learn from the experience of Jesus’ suffering and death? How could this help us deal with difficulties in our own life?

* Tell the liturgical story of Holy Week. See Resource Sheet 5 for suggested script and materials.
* Engage students in Wondering. See suggested wondering statements below (also on story script).

I wonder how Jesus felt with all the people crowding around him, singing his praises, placing their cloaks on the ground.

I wonder why Jesus washed the disciples’ feet.

I wonder what it’s like when you receive Jesus in Holy Communion.

I wonder why the day Jesus died is called ‘Good Friday’.

I wonder what it means to say ‘Jesus died on the cross for us’.

I wonder why the cross is such an important symbol for us.

I wonder if you can remember any of the Stations of the Cross.

I wonder which ‘station’ you like the best.

I wonder which ‘station’ you think is the most important.

I wonder why the celebration that begins on Holy Saturday night is the greatest celebration of the Church.

* Students develop artwork or posters on the celebration of one of the days of Holy Week. Students can refer to the scripture on which the Holy Week story is based in KWL Year 5, p68-70.

1. Good Friday Liturgy
   * Students recall their experience of the Good Friday Liturgy
   * Identify the 3 sections of the Liturgy to students. Use *The Sacramentary* to review the 3 sections of the liturgy
   * Liturgy of the Word. What are the readings? Read the texts in prayer. Who do we pray for in the General Intercessions? How is this different to Sunday Mass?
   * Veneration of the Cross. What do we do here? What symbols are used? Why do we venerate the cross? What hymns and refrains are used?
   * Holy Communion. How is this similar and different to the celebration of the Eucharist?
2. Read ‘Living the Gospel’ in KWL Year 5, p71-72. As a class discuss the concluding questions on p72. Relate this information to the doctrine.

* Send parents information about the Easter Vigil celebration in the parish. This could be communicated through a letter or as a notice in the school newsletter. Alert parents to the importance of this celebration and encourage families to attend. Bring to their attention the focus of the Easter unit on the Vigil, its symbols and actions. Students will have an opportunity to share their insights and experience of the Easter Vigil during this unit.

**Resource Sheet 1**

**Our Lent Prayer Place**

**Unit 5.2**

**YOU WILL NEED:**

\* small table

\* Liturgical calendar (see Unit 4.2)

\* box or basket, containing a ***purple*** cloth, Project Compassion box, Bible, bookstand, crucifix and purple candle (white candle tied with purple ribbon) next to your chair

*Invite children to sit reverently in a circle in the part of the classroom where you intend to set up a prayer place. Begin by saying…*

**As Lent begins we’re going to change our prayer place. During Lent we will have different symbols and objects to help us to be with God.**

*Cover the prayer table with a purple cloth.***At this time of the Church’s year we place a purple cloth on the table. Purple is the Church’s colour for getting ready or preparing. During Lent we prepare ourselves to celebrate the great season of Easter.**

*Point to the season of Lent on the Liturgical calendar.*

**The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday for Roman or Western Catholics, but for most Eastern Catholic Churches, it begins on the Monday before Ash Wednesday.**[[2]](#footnote-2)

**With the help of the Holy Spirit, Lent can be a time for our hearts to grow and change through praying, fasting and almsgiving.**

*Hold the Project Compassion box.*

**One way we could do this is to give up something we really like in order to help others who are experiencing difficulty.**

*Hold the Bible up for all children to see. Be conscious of handling the Bible in a reverent manner.*

**At this time in the Church’s year we remember and listen to stories from the Bible of what Jesus said and did towards the end of his life on earth.**

*Place the Bible on the bookstand.*

*Hold the crucifix.*

**This is a crucifix. It’s different to a cross because it has Jesus on it. The crucifix reminds us of the rejection Jesus experienced and the way he died.**

*Place the cross on the prayer place.*

*Hold the candle.*

**The candle reminds us that Jesus is always with us. We’ll light the candle each time we pray or when we’re listening to the stories from the Bible. The light of the candle reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world.**

*Place the candle on the prayer place.*

**This is our prayer place for the season of Lent.**

*Point to the symbols and objects as you name them again.*

**It has a purple cloth, the Project Compassion box, the Bible, a crucifix, and a candle.**

**See** <http://resource.fraynework.com.au/object.cfm?o=136> *Prayer for the Season* PowerPoint.

**Resource Sheet 2**

**Jesus in the Desert (Mt 4:1-11)**

**Unit 5.2**

**You will need:**

* Bible, book stand
* sand box (sand in large tray or box)
* 1 wooden (peg) figure - Jesus
* small stones or pebbles

*Children are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story. When the children are settled, go to the shelf and carry the materials as you would the Bible. Place these beside you.*

*Pick up Bible opening it at Matthew as you say:*

**Our story today comes from Matthew’s Gospel in the New Testament of the Bible.**

*Place the Bible on a stand and bring the sand box in front of you:*

**This is the desert. It’s not the whole desert but just a bit to remind us of the desert.**

*Slowly run your fingers through the sand as you say:*

**Deserts can be very hot in the daytime and very cold at night. They can be lonely places and places of danger. There’s not much water in the desert and things don’t grow very well so there’s not much food. Sometimes the wind blows all the sand around and it’s hard to know where you are.**

**Deserts are not places you would usually go, but lots of important stories about the people of God happened in the desert.**

**Moses and the people of God spent forty years in the desert journeying to the land that God had promised them.**

*Hold up the wooden figure of Jesus.*

**After Jesus’ baptism in the river Jordan, and just before he began his ministry, the Spirit led him into the wilderness.**

*Place Jesus in the desert.*

**He fasted for forty days and forty nights and afterwards he was famished.**

*Place some pebbles in the sand on your left hand side. Move Jesus and stand him beside the pebbles.*

**The tempter came to Jesus and said, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But Jesus answered, “It is written, ‘A person does not live by bread only, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”**

*Create a small mound in the sand on your right hand side. Stand Jesus on top of it. You may also have an outline of Jerusalem.*

**Then the devil took Jesus to the holy city and placed him on the highest point of the temple, saying to him,**

**“If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, ‘God will command his angels to protect you,’ and ‘on their hands they will lift you up, so that you will not hurt yourself against the stones.’”**

*Close your hand into a fist and keep index finger extended. Move your index finger from side to side.*

**Jesus said to the tempter, “It is also written in Scripture, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”**

*Create a larger mound in the sand or place the large rock in the middle of the desert. Stand Jesus on top of it:*

**Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to Jesus, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”**

*Move your hand in a strong pointing gesture to indicate ‘go away’*

**Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’”**

**Then the devil left him.**

*Sit quietly for a moment and begin to wonder together.*

**I wonder why the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness (desert) just before he began his ministry (work in the world).**

**I wonder what it was like for Jesus in the desert.**

**I wonder why he fasted in the desert.**

**I wonder what it’s like to be very hungry, to be famished.**

**I wonder what other stories you remember that happened in the desert.**

**I wonder what Jesus meant when he said to the tempter, ‘People do not live by bread only, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’** (If necessary go back to the temptation that these words are a response to).

**I wonder what it means to, “Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.”**

**I wonder what other things some people choose to serve today, rather than serving God.**

*Carefully pack story materials into storage box and put on shelf. Ensure that children are watching so they know how to pack the materials away and where to find them.*

**Resource Sheet 3**

**Jesus Heals a Leper** **(Mk 1: 40-42)**

**Unit 5.2**

**You will need:**

* 2 peg figures: Jesus, one leper,
* green or brown felt for the ground

*Lay out the felt and begin, showing the Bible*

**This story comes from the Gospel of Mark in the New Testament section of the Bible.**

*Put the figure of Jesus on the felt.*

**As today’s story begins, Jesus is in Galilee and the surrounding area preaching the Good news of God’s Kingdom, when a leper approaches him.**

*Put the figure of the leper next to Jesus.*

**In Jesus time the Jewish people saw lepers as unclean and they were excluded from the community. The leper came to Jesus and pleaded on his knees, ‘If you choose, you can make me clean.’**

*Stretch your hand over the leper’s head and then touch his cheek and say:*

**Filled with compassion Jesus said, ‘I do choose’ ‘Be made clean!’ And the leprosy left him at once and he was cured.**

*Place your hand over Jesus*

**Jesus then sent him away and told him not to tell anyone, but to show himself to the priest, because the priests determined if someone was clean again. This would mean he could re-join the community.**

*Move the man further along as you say:*

**The man went away, but then started talking about it freely and telling the story everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer go openly into any town.’**

*Point to Jesus*

**Even though Jesus stayed out in the country, people still came to him from everywhere.**

*Pause quietly for a moment and then begin to wonder together.*

**I wonder why the leper chose to ask Jesus for healing.**

**I wonder why Jesus was moved with pity for the leper.**

**I wonder why Jesus asked the leper not to tell anyone what had happened.**

**I wonder what we can learn from the way Jesus responded to the man with leprosy.**

**I wonder if you know of a person or people who are treated as outcasts today.**

**I wonder if you’ve ever felt rejected.**

*Carefully pack story materials into storage box and put away.*

**Resource Sheet 4**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **By whom?** | **How?** | **Why was he rejected** | **How does Jesus respond?** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Resource Sheet 5**

HOLY WEEK

Unit 5.2

Mark 11: 7-10; John 13:1-20; Matthew 26:17-29; Matthew 26: 36-27:56; John 19:38-42

**You will need:**

* Felt squares: 2 red, 1 white, 1 black (approximate size: A4)
* Objects: palm, bowl, towel, cup (chalice) preferably with grape juice, plate with bread, crucifix

*Children are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story. When the children are ready carry the materials carefully from the story shelf to the story area and place beside you and say*

**Today’s story is about Holy Week, a very special week in the Church’s year. It is when the Church remembers and celebrates the last days of Jesus’ life.**

*Place a red felt square on the floor to your right* **Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday.**

*Hold palm as you say:*  **On this day we remember when Jesus entered the great city of Jerusalem riding on a donkey.   
Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees. They shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord…Hosanna in the highest heaven!”**

**The Church celebrates this event at Mass on Palm Sunday:   
Each person holds a palm, standing outside the church. The priest blesses the palms with holy water and reads the Gospel, telling of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday. The priest then leads the procession of people holding their palms, into the church to celebrate the Mass.***Place palm on red square.*

*Point to red square as you say:*  **On Palm Sunday the priest wears red, the colour used to remember people who have died for their faith. There is another Gospel on this Sunday, which tells us about Jesus’ passion and death.**

*Place a white square to the left of the red square as you say:*  **The central part of Holy Week is called the Easter Triduum, the three special days of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.**

*Pick up the bowl and towel as you say:*  **On Holy Thursday we remember Jesus’ Last Supper with his disciples. At the meal, Jesus poured water into a basin, washed the disciples’ feet and wiped them with a towel.**

**During the Mass on Holy Thursday evening, the priest kneels like a servant and washes and dries the feet of some of the parishioners.***Place bowl and towel on a corner of the white square*

**This is also the night we celebrate the Last Supper, the last meal Jesus had with his disciples.**

*Pick up the plate (preferably with bread on it) as you say:*  **While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it, he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”**

*Place the plate on the opposite corner to the bowl and towel on the white square.   
Pick up the cup (preferably with wine in it) as you say:*  **Then he took the cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them and said, “Take, drink; this is my blood.”**

*Hold the plate and cup as you say:*  **During the Liturgy of the Eucharist the priest changes the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. This happens at every Mass but on Holy Thursday it is the very special celebration of the Lord’s Supper.** *Place plate and cup on white square*

*Point to white square as you say:***On Holy Thursday, the priest wears white, the colour of joy. This is because we remember with joy the gift of Jesus in the form of bread and wine.   
  
At the end of this Mass, the priest carries the consecrated hosts which have not been used, in procession to another place, called the Altar of Repose. This is to get the church ready for Good Friday when the church is bare.**

*Place a red square to the left of the white square as you say:*  **Good Friday is the second day of the Easter Triduum.**

*Hold the crucifix as you say:*  **On this day we remember when the soldiers took Jesus. They twisted thorns into a crown and put this on his head. They led him away and crucified him.  
  
Good Friday is the only day in the whole year when Mass is not celebrated. However, the Church remembers Jesus’ suffering and death by praying the Stations of the Cross and also in a special liturgy at three o’clock.**

**This liturgy has three parts.**

* **the liturgy of the Word, which includes the Gospel story of the suffering and death of Jesus.**
* **the Veneration of the Cross, when people process to the front of the church to kiss the cross, as a sign of respect and love for Jesus who died on the cross.**
* **Holy Communion when consecrated hosts are brought from the Altar of Repose for the people to receive.** *Place crucifix on red square*

*Point to red square and say:*  **On Good Friday, the priest wears red, the colour used to commemorate people who have died for their faith.**

**As we silently leave the church there is no singing… The church is left bare… the tabernacle is empty… and there are no candles or decorations… Jesus has died.**

*Place a black square to the left of the red square as you say:***The third day of the Easter Triduum is called Holy Saturday. During the day****it is as though we are at the Lord’s tomb, thinking about his suffering and death, waiting for his resurrection. The atmosphere is one of quiet sadness.**

**However this atmosphere changes dramatically on Holy Saturday night! This is the Church’s night of nights. The greatest celebration has begun!**

**Perhaps you and your family could go to this great celebration called the Vigil Mass of Easter. We will also hear this wonderful story when we come back from the Easter break.**

*Sit back, pause for a moment, then wonder about the story together*

**I wonder how Jesus felt with all the people crowding around him, singing his praises, placing their cloaks on the ground.**

**I wonder why Jesus washed the disciples’ feet.**

**I wonder what it’s like when you receive Jesus in Holy Communion.**

**I wonder why the day Jesus died is called ‘Good Friday’.**

**I wonder what it means to say, ‘Jesus died on the cross for us’.**

**I wonder why the cross is such an important symbol for us.**

**I wonder if you can remember any of the Stations of the Cross.**

**I wonder which ‘station’ you like the best.**

**I wonder which ‘station’ you think is the most important.**

**I wonder why the celebration that begins on Holy Saturday night is the greatest celebration of the Church.**

*Carefully pack story materials into storage box and put away.*

1. KWL, Teaching Companion, 4a, p73 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Most Eastern Catholic Churches begin the season of Lent on the Monday before Ash Wednesday. For Maronite and Armenian Catholics this day is called Ash Monday and for Byzantine Catholics it is called Clean Monday. For more information on Eastern Catholic Churches see <http://resource.fraynework.com.au/object.cfm?o=205&pid=1472&showrm=true&uptam=false> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)